

ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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INTRODUCTION

Louisiana leads the United States in the production of alligator skins. After rebuilding the population through research, management and law enforcement during the 1960s, the wild harvest from 1972 through 2021 has produced 1,135,197 wild skins. In 2021, the alligator industry, including the wild harvest, egg collection, and farm raised alligators, has generated approximately \$83 million in economic benefit to the state of Louisiana.

The wild harvest has averaged approximately 18,000 skins annually, worth over \$3.8 million dockside including meat during the past five years. The 2021 wild harvest of 14,348 alligators was valued at over 3.1 million, which includes the value of the alligator meat. In calendar year 2021, farmers sold 338,942 skins, which averaged 28.75 cm belly width and were valued at over \$70 million, including the value of the alligator meat. Since 1986, the Louisiana alligator ranching program has collected over 12 million eggs and returned nearly 1.3 million healthy alligators back to the wild.



WASHINGTON D.C. EDUCATION



The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) contracted with Glenn Delaney to stay abreast of any federal administrative or legislative activities that might be of interest to LDWF, the Fur Advisory Council, or the Alligator Advisory Council.

Mr. Delaney maintained his dialogue with key Members of Congress, Committees and their staff to educate them on issues important to Louisiana's sustainable use wildlife programs including a broad range of funding and policy legislation under consideration in the 117th Congress. In particular, he continued to monitor and provide analyses of legislation advanced by animal

rights groups and their advocates on Capitol Hill so that they could be addressed in a timely and effective manner. This included anti-trapping legislation such as the Refuge from Cruel Trapping Act and provisions hidden in various large-scale funding bills. Animal rights groups also sought to exploit the alleged linkage between coronavirus and live animals sold at wet markets in China as their strategy to promote several bills such as the Preventing Future Pandemics Act designed specifically to undermine the principles of sustainable use and impose global bans on legitimate wildlife trade. He also focused on amendments to the Lacey Act included in the "America COMPETES

Act" that had the potential to prohibit interstate commerce and imports of certain species if determined by the Department of Interior to be "injurious." This included reptiles and their offspring and eggs.

Mr. Delaney sought funding for a variety of programs that benefit Louisiana's wildlife programs and industries, including working with Senator Kennedy's office to secure additional FY 22 funding to further develop a CITES ePermitting system to facilitate wildlife trade in Louisiana. With letters of support from the AAC, he also continued to pursue funding for research on infectious diseases affecting Louisiana's alligator farms and wild population in both the FY 22 and FY 23 appropriations cycles. The FY 22 enacted legislation includes text that continues to stress the need for USDA APHIS to develop "a critical strategy for addressing these threats" to both alligators and human health. The FY23 Senate Appropriations Committee Report (not yet enacted) includes a provision championed by Senator Cassidy that would provide \$500,000 for this research.

Mr. Delaney worked closely with LDWF administration and program managers to address pertinent federal administrative and legislative issues. The funding for the contract was split equally between the Fur Advisory Council and the Alligator Advisory Council's budgets.



ALLIGATOR MARKETING & TECHNICAL REPRESENTATION

The Alligator Advisory Council and LDWF contracted Christy Plott through Monarch Marketing to provide technical representation at national and international meetings regarding alligator and crocodile management, regulation, enforcement and trades as well as to provide marketing for Louisiana alligator hides.

Ms. Plott worked to establish alliances within the Crocodile Specialist Group (CSG), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and other conservation entities. Ms. Plott was nominated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to attend a virtual and in person CITES Standing Committee in March 2022 in Lyon, France. The meetings were widely attended with more than 80 countries and 500 individuals in attendance. Over 80 topics and agenda items were presented to committee members and party countries. Major topics of discussion included engagement

of indigenous peoples and local communities, implementation of a global electronic CITES permitting system, as well as zoonotic diseases and reducing demand in items triggering illegal trade in wildlife.

Ms. Plott spoke at several major international fashion forums including Lineapelle in Milan, Italy in February 2022 and with the Accessories Council of New York in June 2022. The topics were sustainability in the fashion industry and how the use of exotic leather and particularly Louisiana alligator leather benefitted local communities, conservation of habitats and species and provided nature-based solutions to climate change through wetlands restoration.

Louisiana's alligator program was highlighted in the keynote speech given at the National Assembly of Sportsman's Caucus (NASC) meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas in December 2021. NASC is the largest non-partisan caucus of sportsmen and women in the country, and the NASC summit is

the only national conference for state legislators dedicated to advancing America's hunting, fishing, recreational shooting, and trapping heritage. The annual event is generally attended by around 300 legislators, state wildlife officials and other stakeholders. Ms. Plott and other Louisiana Alligator Advisory members and Louisiana Department of Wildlife leadership attended the summit and visited the Arkansas Governor's mansion for a holiday dinner.

Louisiana alligator leather was featured in numerous podcasts, YouTube educational seminars, online articles and print magazine articles, all supporting sustainable use and Louisiana's management and oversight of American alligator populations. The social media presence of the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council continues to grow in popularity as well, with over 85,000 views on one video of a baby alligator hatching at a Louisiana alligator farm.





INTERNATIONAL ALLIGATOR & CROCODILE TRADE STUDIES

The Alligator Advisory Council and LDWF contracted with the World Conservation and Monitoring Center to develop the International Alligator and Crocodile Trade Studies report. This report has been funded since 1988 to monitor world trade in all crocodilians and to increase accountability of sustainable management practices.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUSES

The Alligator Advisory Council and LDWF sponsored the 18th Annual National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) Sportsman-Legislator Summit. NASC is the largest non-partisan caucus in the country whose goal is to advance hunting, fishing, and conservation of wildlife. Each year, legislators, governors, and wildlife directors from all over the USA attend the summit to gain education on important topics for advancing conservation. The caucuses this year were held in Little Rock, Arkansas.

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

LDWF/AAC staff attends many outreach events with live hatching alligators, alligator skins and skulls and talks to the public about the alligator success story. Although many festivals and large events were cancelled this year due to COVID, staff participated in several large educational events such as the Louisiana Envirothon targeting high school students and 4-H events targeting elementary and middle school children. Staff also presented at numerous schools and libraries state-wide. The Council provided biological facts and educational support to other LDWF staff who presented at schools and at other outreach events.

The Council and LDWF also partnered with a number of educational and outreach organizations such as the Audubon Zoo and Wetland Watchers to reach a broader audience. LDWF provided an alligator purse to the Alligator festival in 2021. Isabella Daspit served as Miss Alligator Festival queen for 2021-2022. She has attended Louisiana fairs, festivals, parades and balls representing the Alligator Festival and promoting the sustainable use of alligator.



2021-2022 EXPENDITURES

The Alligator Advisory Council operates within the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and is responsible for reviewing and approving recommended marketing, research, and educational programs to be funded from the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund to ensure that any monies from the funds are expended for the specific goals of the council.



ALLIGATOR RESOURCE FUNDS	
Budgeted	\$500,000.00
Salaries	\$29,916.27
Related Benefits	\$14,929.23
Operating Services (Annual National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses)	\$25,207.60
Professional Services	\$217,849.62
Alligator Resource Funds Expended	\$287,902.72

LOUISIANA ALLIGATOR ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

AAC MEMBERS LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVES

Tom Benge - Eastern Coastal Zone
206 Decatur Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
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Term: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2025

Tim Allen - Central Coastal Zone
P.O. Box 206, Houma, LA, 70361
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Term: July 21, 2021 - July 20, 2027

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309 La Rue France, Suite 201, Lafayette, LA 70508
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Term: March 16, 2021 - June 30, 2023

ALLIGATOR HUNTER REPRESENTATIVES

Tony Howard - North of US Hwy 90 Representative
170 Thomas Street, Sarepta, LA 71071
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Term: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2025

Ryan Smith - Southeast Representative
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Term: July 22, 2021 - July 21, 2027

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Jeff Donald
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